Shortage of foodgrains

2462. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:
be pleased to state:

(a) whether a shortage of 22 million tonnes of Foodgrains has been predicted by 1990; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to meet the projected shortage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Amendment to Essential Commodities Act

2463. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry has recently suggested review of various provisions of the Essential Commodities Act and Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act for ensuring fair implementation of the legislations; and

(b) if so, what is the response of Government to the demand?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): (a) The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry have raised the following points regarding Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1981;

(i) Offences punishable under the Act should be made bailable;

(ii) Appellate jurisdiction should be given to judicial authority in case of confiscation of goods seized owing to the violation of the provisions of the Act or control orders framed thereunder, ordered by the Collector. At present, the aggrieved party could appeal to State Govt. concerned and the Act bars jurisdiction of the Courts in this regard; and

(iii) Provisions are being invoked for minor technical offences.

(b) The response of the Government in regard to the above suggestions is indicated below:

(i) Though offences have been made non-bailable under the Act, this does not altogether take away the discretion of the courts under section 437 of the Cr. P.C. to release the accused person on bail in appropriate cases. Hence, it was not considered necessary to make an amendment as suggested.

(ii) The E.C. Act, 1955 earlier provided for appeal to judicial authority in case of confiscation of goods. Under this procedure, there were considerable delays in taking decisions on disposal of confiscated goods at court cases would be prolonged, thus depriving the public at large the use of the essential commodities. Hence, it was considered that no modification in the existing provision is required.

(iii) Govt. have since issued suitable guidelines to State Govts. in regard to enforcement of the provisions of the E.C. (Spl. Provisions) Act, 1981.

Land Reforms for the benefit of the poor

2464. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government's attention has been drawn to the observations of Prof. P. C. Joshi of the Institute of Economic Growth that the country's post-Independence Land Reform Programme

had marginalised the very people it intended to emancipate—the peasant masses; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take to review the land reform programmes so that the benefits of the new deal would go to the landless peasants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARI) (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Hon'ble Member is presumably referring to the 6th John Barnabas Memorial Lecture delivered by Prof. P. C. Joshi on 5th February, 1988 under the auspices of the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development on the subject 'Participatory Approach to Development and Social Change' and which was reported in the Hindustan Times of 6th February, 1988.

The thrust of Prof. Joshi's lecture was that the rural masses must have a greater involvement in the economic and political process of development, otherwise the development process would marginalise the very people it intends to emancipate. However, at one place he has made a a passing reference that "Before the introduction of land reforms the peasant masses were excluded from land ownership but they were very largely in *defacto* control of the production process with landlords being absentee owners and being restrained somewhat paternalism. The working peasantry were no doubt exploited and ... poverty stricken but were not entirely insecurity stricken and landless... After the introductio nof land reforms. which were diluted and if not sabotaged by the landed interests in collusion with politicians and lower level officials very large sections of the poor peasant masses were disposed from land and were now marginalised in the land system as well as the production system."

The Government do not agree with the above assessment made by Prof. Joshi regarding the effects of the land reforms policy. The policy of land reforms pursued since Independence has consisted of, among others, measures such as abolishing intermediary tenures, tenancy reforms and imposition of ceilings on land holdings all of which have aimed at improving the access of actual tillers and rural poor to land. The development assistance under other programmes have enabled them greater participation in the production system. The abolition of intermediary tenures has resulted in more than 20 million tenants being brought in direct contact with the State. Besides, a large proportion of an estimated 6 million hectares of waste and fallow and other classes of land vesting in the State has been distributed to the landless and marginal landholders. As a result of tenancy reforms an estimated 7.72 million tenants have acquired ownership of about 5.6 million hectares of land besides those who gained protection from other forms of agrarian exploitation. As a result of imposition of ceilings on agricultural holdings 73.37 lakh acres of land were declared surplus of which 44.31 lakh acres have been distributed to 41.01 lakh beneficiaries with priority being given to the landless poor. Thus Land reforms programme could not have possibly led to the dispossession of the peasant masses from land.

There is however still a lot of work to be done in implementation of land reforms programme. Land being a State Subject, States have been advised to take expeditious legislative and administrative measures to effectively implement the land reforms measures.

The progress of land reforms is reviewed by Government of India at various levels and particularly in conference of Revenue Ministers of States. Two such conferences were held in the recent past in 1985 and 1986. The States have been asked to give effect to various measures to strengthen the implementation of land reforms emanating from the consensus of these two conferences.